is the commander's primary advisor on indirect fire, but he generally does not know as much about mortar fires and mortar positioning as you do. Push this information through him so it ends up in the order; otherwise, the assistant S-3 actually writing the order may put you where you can't be effective.

My links with the S-3 were considerably weaker than those with the FSO, but he is still an important staff officer. He is ultimately responsible for all training and operations within the battalion. Again, his knowledge of mortars is likely to be either dated or nonexistent, and it is in your best interest to educate him. You must resolve two significant issues with him—who controls your emplacement and whether you can displace under your own authority (or must get battalion level approval). There are no doctrinal answers to these questions; they tend to depend upon the personalities involved. Be sure that you and the S-3 reach an understanding regarding these issues.

In a light infantry battalion, logistical assets are limited and not suited to carrying such heavy items as mortar ammunition. Detailed coordination with the S-4 and support platoon leader regarding ammunition resupply will be a great help to you in the field. Without it, you'll find yourself sending your platoon sergeant off alone in a HMMWV in quest of mortar rounds.

Your level of contact with the battalion commander will vary with his command and his interest in mortar fires. I was fortunate enough to have a commander who had been a mortar platoon leader. He therefore saw me as *his* mortar platoon leader and kept his door open to me regarding mortar issues. Not all my counterparts in other battalions enjoyed this luxury. Again, education is the key. If your battalion commander does not fully understand your capabilities, demonstrate them to him. If you take some time in garrison to sell yourself to the commander, you may find your mortars used more in the field.

There is no way to avoid the culture shock involved in taking over a mortar platoon. But a quick education will go a long way in helping you employ your valuable asset effectively. Mortars continue to exist because, if properly used, they can provide accurate and responsive indirect fires to the battalion. The charge to you, the lieutenant on the ground, is to make that happen.

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The Leader's Reconnaissance

An Argument Against It

CAPTAIN KEVIN J. DOUGHERTY

"The leader's reconnaissance," according to Field Manual (FM) 7-10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, "is crucial to every operation." At least one previous article in INFANTRY also touted personal reconnaissance as "the most important combat multiplier a commander or leader has at his disposal." ("Personal Reconnaissance," by Captain Joseph Votel, INFANTRY, March-April 1988, p. 33.)

I disagree with these assessments. I believe that the ad hoc nature of the leader's reconnaissance violates several principles of war and that the same intent could be achieved more effectively by a habitually organized small unit.

FM 7-10 cautions that "only essential personnel should take part" in a leader's reconnaissance. But who, exactly, are these essential personnel? Let's say a company is conducting a raid, a mission for which FM 7-10 specifically requires a leader's reconnaissance, and for which ARTEP 7-10-MTP lists the leader's reconnaissance as a "critical task."

Considering the tasks assigned in the FM and the MTP, and on the basis of my own experience, a leader's reconnaissance for a raid might include the company commander, his battalion radio telephone operator (RTO), the three platoon leaders, a two-man surveillance team, a two-man security team, and a compassman. This group already consists of 11 men, and an entire light infantry scout platoon has only 18. Furthermore, the purpose of the reconnaissance invites even greater expansion. Other possible candidates for the reconnaissance would be a company RTO, a leader for each of the probable left and right security sections, and the engineer squad leader.

When I was a scout observer-controller at the Joint Readiness Training Center, I had a hard time convincing five-man

scout squads that they could move as a group in the vicinity of the objective, and these units were specifically trained for the job. What makes us think 11—or more—men thrown together are going to be able to do it?

In my opinion, the leader's reconnaissance violates four principles of war—security, surprise, economy of force, and unity of command. This is not to say a leader's reconnaissance is never appropriate; it can be very helpful in some cases. But it does have certain shortcomings that are worth considering.

Security. In discussing security, FM 100-5, *Operations*, cautions the commander, "Never permit the enemy to acquire an unexpected advantage." Can there be a greater advantage than the one an enemy gains by destroying or degrading a company's chain of command while it is isolated from the main body? That is exactly the risk incurred on a traditional leader's reconnaissance. To be sure, the group includes two security men, probably armed with M16 rifles, but is that enough protection for the company's leaders? The other members of the patrol are accustomed to maneuvering *units*, not maneuvering themselves. Besides, to put it kindly, their individual movement techniques (IMTs) are probably a little rusty. One or two in the group may have only 9mm pistols, while others are burdened with radios.

An exceptional leader's reconnaissance party may have standing operating procedures (SOPs) for breaking contact, but I'd hazard a guess that they haven't rehearsed it lately. To make matters worse, most of the soldiers in the reconnaissance party are involved in reconnaissance or some other leader task. Some may be looking at obstacles, enemy positions, or maps, but few are scanning assigned sectors for the sole purpose of providing security. The two-man security element may be able to provide limited early warning, probably well within small-arms range, but they certainly don't have the firepower they need to delay an enemy who is bent on pursuit.

Surprise. FM 100-5 says that, to gain surprise, a force should "strike the enemy at a time or place, or in a manner, for which he is unprepared." If the leader's reconnaissance is compromised, all hope of surprise is lost. Reconnaissance, particularly of an enemy position, is never easy. And when we form a leader's reconnaissance party, we are essentially assigning that task to several individuals and asking them to function as a group without the benefit of training, rehearsing, bonding, or developing SOPs as a collective body. Moreover, we are asking them to do this in the face of the enemy and, more often than not, under rigid time constraints as well.

The chances of being compromised under these conditions are simply too great, and the problem with being compromised at this stage of the game is that there is no time to react. The company is in an objective release point (ORP), the "no later than" time is fast approaching, it's dark, and the plan has already been briefed and rehearsed. A major change at this point violates another principle of war—simplicity. For that matter, a major change is disruptive even if the leader's reconnaissance has not been compromised.

Economy of Force. In defining "economy of force," FM 100-5 says that the commander must accept "prudent risk in selected areas... to achieve superiority in the area where decision is sought." As leaders, we all want the nice, warm feeling that comes from first-hand knowledge. We want to see things for ourselves, and this does improve our decision making ability. But the risks to security and surprise on this reconnaissance are very real. We must remember that the function of the reconnaissance is to support the main effort, which, in our example, is the raid itself. Getting a nice, warm feeling is not worth compromising that effort. By this time, we are well past the point at which a major revision can be made in our plan.

If we follow the logic that the reconnaissance is a supporting effort, it runs afoul of the FM 100-5 injunction to "allocate minimum essential combat power to secondary efforts." A leader's reconnaissance of the composition we are assuming (and as required by ARTEP 7-10-MTP) contains all of a light infantry company's green-tab officers. Leadership is "the most essential element of combat power," and risking such a sizable chunk of it on a secondary effort is not economy of force. A commander who is snooping around the objective cannot, at the same time, be synchronizing the overall battle, supervising final preparations, and making decisions based on information reports.

Unity of Command (Effort). For the purposes of this discussion, the principle of unity of command would be better stated as *unity of effort*. Obviously, a lead-

er's reconnaissance has unity of command if it is under the control of the common company commander. But this is probably one of the few things the members of the patrol have in common. They are not a team. They are an ad hoc organization, and we are all, by now, familiar enough with Task Force Smith in Korea to know the dangers of ad hoc organizations.

In discussing AirLand Battle imperatives, FM 100-5 says that to ensure unity of effort, "habitual relationships are used to maximize teamwork." The closest thing to teamwork on a leader's reconnaissance is the relationship between the commander and his RTO. These are the only two members who routinely work literally side by side, and probably the only two who have ever fired and maneuvered together. Why create an ad hoc organization to do something when we already have units that are trained and equipped specifically for that purpose?

This brings me to my recommendation. I suggest changing the term "leader's reconnaissance" in our FMs and MTPs to simply "reconnaissance." The important thing is getting the needed information, not who gets it. Squads, platoons, and even companies have reconnaissance tasks listed in their MTPs. They are organized, equipped, and trained for the job. They have developed SOPs and have rehearsed them.

AirLand Battle doctrine is based largely on small-unit initiative. If a company commander doesn't have a squad in his company that he can trust to recon an objective, he has a much larger problem. Additionally, giving the sub-unit the reconnaissance mission early in the troop-leading procedures allows time for reconnaissance that a leader's reconnaissance from the ORP does not. Even if the reconnaissance is compromised, the commander has time to adjust his plan to minimize the effects of loss of surprise.

As part of the training process, the commander must explain to his sub-units what he wants from the reconnaissance. What specific information does he need? What are the indicators? What gives him his nice, warm feelings? The commander does not just tell a squad leader to pick a "good" support position; he asks questions about the characteristics of a good support position, and uses briefbacks to make sure the squad leader's definitions coincide with his own. He explains certain considerations of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time (METT-T) that may affect the mission. For example, does he want to maximize weapon standoff by having the support position relatively far away from the objective, or does he want it closer in to improve accuracy against selected targets? If he tells the squad leader what information he needs and why, chances are he'll get that information (task and purpose). If not, the problem is in training, not in decentralization.

Decentralization is integral to our doctrine, and our doctrine has proved its worth. FM 100-5 says: *Decentralization demands subordinates who are willing and able to take risks* [training] *and superiors who nurture that willingness and ability in their subordinates* [command climate]. *If subordinates are to exercise initiative without endangering the overall success of the force, they must thoroughly understand the commander's intent and the situational assumptions* [METT-T] *on which it was based.*

There certainly is a place for the leader's reconnaissance, but it is not the only answer. In fact, it often presents problems that could be solved by allowing a properly trained sub-unit to do the reconnaissance. In other cases, it may be appropriate for the leader to accompany the sub-unit to get a first-hand feel for the situation. There are several options and, for this reason, the term *reconnaissance* should replace *leader's reconnaissance* in our FMs and MTPs.

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CAS In the Deep Fight?

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The 2d Infantry Division's success during its Battle Command Training Program (BCTP), Warfighter '92, was largely a result of the effective coordination of the division's artillery and close air support (CAS) assets.

In this exercise, the division needed to win the deep battle to shape the close fight. Our preparations for the exercise therefore focused on establishing a technique for coordinating the employment of air and organic indirect fires in support of the deep battle. If artillery and air assets were to be coordinated effectively, we would have to have a flexible and responsive way to bring massive firepower to bear against fixed, newly acquired, and previously undetected tar-